

Gallery Walk Activities in ESL Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of students towards Gallery Walk and how Gallery Walk can be used as a tool to enhance students' speaking skills. The research methodology integrated the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design. This study involved an Intact Group which consisted of 16 Perlis Matriculation College students. The instruments employed in this study were questionnaires and focused group interviews. Descriptive data analysis was utilized to analyse the data collected using questionnaires. The researchers also collected data from the participants by utilizing focused group interviews. Findings from the study showed that majority of the participants had positive perceptions towards the use of Gallery Walk in enhancing their speaking skills. Gallery Walk activity also incorporated the use of ICT as a way to promote quality education, i.e. Sustainable Development Goal (Goal: 4). Through Gallery Walk, students' confidence to speak English was also heightened as they actively involved by exchanging responses while completing the task assigned to them. Therefore, the findings of the study are hoped to provide insights for academicians to integrate the strategy of using Gallery Walk in ESL speaking classes to enhance students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Speaking Skills, Gallery Walk, ESL, Quality Education

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Fear among ESL learners in speaking in front of their peers will surely have a negative impact on their performance in speaking tasks. Furthermore, wrong choice of speaking activity used in the classrooms could also lead to students' reluctance to speak freely and comfortably. Hence, one of the greatest challenges for ESL teachers as well as language instructors is to create interesting and interactive speaking activities. This is due to the fact that language instructor's or the teacher's creativity in designing the activities will not only enhance the students' proficiency and confidence level in speaking but also promote students' active participation during the lesson.

Furthermore, ESL teachers as well as language instructors should also be aware of the Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) and UN Sustainable Development Goals, Quality Education (Goal: 4) when they design interesting classroom activities when speaking skill is concerned. It would benefit the students when IR 4.0 and Quality Education are incorporated in speaking activities in ESL classrooms.

Problem Statement

Students' reluctance to participate in speaking classes is a common scenario in ESL classrooms (Othman, Mohd. Radzi & Athii, 2014; Abdullah, Abu Bakar & Mahbob, 2012). The act of being passive or unwillingness to speak using the target language is considered the main obstacle for students to develop oral proficiency in the English language as compared to the development of reading and listening skills (Jenkins, 2008). One of the main reasons for students refusal to join the speaking activity is due to their lack of confidence in using the language (Othman et al., 2014). This negative scenario will somehow affect students' performance in speaking tests. Although there are a lot of factors that can cause students to be passive in speaking class, the researchers believe that it is not always a student's problem per se. In fact, it is a response that results from the teacher's or the language instructor's lack of awareness on students' needs and interest in speaking class. For these reasons, the researchers agreed that they have to take a closer look at the type of speaking activities they are using in class and see if they really capture the students' interest and create a real need for communication so that the speaking class environment will be more active and interactive.

The reason why speaking activities are emphasized is because it is the language instructor's and the teachers' responsibility to design a good speaking activity that will encourage students to participate more in class as well as raise their confidence more in speaking. Good speaking activity will give an opportunity for students to practice speaking skills. Speaking activities such as role-plays, discussions, debates, group presentations, storytelling, gallery walk and interview are a few types of speaking activities commonly used in ESL classrooms. Gallery Walk activities enable students to be actively engaged as they walk throughout the classroom. "They work together in small groups to share ideas and respond to meaningful questions, documents, images, problem-solving situations or texts" (The Teacher Tool Kit, n.d.).

Therefore, the researchers truly believe that Gallery Walk is a very suitable speaking activity to be used in ESL speaking classroom as it promotes speaking among students in a more relaxed environment as they move from one gallery to another in the classroom. Moreover, Gallery Walk activity also incorporates the use of ICT as a way to promote Quality Education as it is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal: 4). In this research, respondents were assigned to come up with their own Japan tour packages. The respondents were required to work in a group of 4 and each group was assigned a city in Japan and they had to search for information on the Internet to look for the price of flight tickets, tourist attractions, halal food in Japan and accommodations. Then, they had to present all the information in the form of a poster and displayed it during Gallery Walk activity.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to discover the use of Gallery Walk as a classroom speaking activity to create a comfortable environment for students to speak naturally and comfortably in front of their peers and to promote one of UN Sustainable Development Goals, i.e. Quality Education. Hence, their participation in Gallery Walk could help them improve their speaking skills and computer skills as well. On the whole, the aim of using Gallery Walk is to boost students' confidence in using the target language confidently and enhance their speaking skills.

Research Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) to explore ESL students' perceptions towards Gallery Walk
- 2) to assess how effective Gallery Walk is in enhancing students' speaking skills

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

- 1) What are ESL students' perceptions towards Gallery Walk?
- 2) Is Gallery Walk effective in enhancing students' speaking skills?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gallery Walk

Gallery Walk is a discussion technique that requires students to get out of their chairs and into active engagement, has a diversity of benefits for students and teachers alike and its advantage is its flexibility (Taylor, 2001, as cited in Pedagogy in Action, 2018). Gallery Walk is a presentation method in which individual learners or groups exhibit their work products (often on poster) and walk around the class viewing each other's product. They could be asked to give feedback to the group of individuals who created the work (Bowman, 2005). Gallery Walk offers an opportunity for active learning by boosting learners' participation (Francek, 2006). Taylor (2001) stated that Gallery Walk highlights the collaborative, social nature of learning because students work in teams to synthesize information written from a variety of perspectives (as cited in Pedagogy in Action, 2018).

Gallery Walk connects learners to each other and learners to the training topic in a

number of interesting, interactive ways (Bowman, 2005). Taylor (2001) stated that Gallery Walk promotes alternative and multiple approaches to problems because students are exposed to a variety of perspectives posted at different discussion "stations" (as cited in Pedagogy in Action, 2018). Gallery Walk provides an atmosphere of the learning process that is not too formal and they can express what they want to say and it can increase their skill in speaking (Anwar, 2015; Dinata & Anggraini, 2017). Anwar (2015) stressed that Gallery Walk technique managed to enhance students' speaking skill, in her study involving 34 students who underwent two cycles of Gallery Walk. Namaziandost, Esfahani, Nasri and Mirshekaran (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental research involving 60 Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners who were divided into control group and experimental group. The findings of their study indicated that the experimental group received better scores in the post-test, compared to the control group. The researchers concluded Gallery Walk technique gave positive effects to learners' language learning.

There are several ways that Gallery Walk can be implemented in the lessons. Delgado (2006) suggested that teachers and language instructors can carry out Gallery Walk activity for students to share collaborative group work in the classroom by instructing the students to exhibit posters that they had produced during the group work around the class, as a culminating activity. Gallery Walk can also be conducted in literature classes whereby students can exhibit their responses to a literary text as a post-reading activity (Delgado, 2006).

Gallery Walk Strategy in Teaching Speaking

Below are the common procedures in conducting a Gallery Walk (Francek, 2006):

- 1) Create and post questions
- 2) Group students, assign roles, and stress team building
- 3) Assign stations
- 4) Rotation
- 5) Begin oral presentation



Figure 1. The Implementation of Gallery Walk
Source: <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/gallerywalk/what.html>

What is Speaking?

Nunan (2003) stated that speaking is a part of productive skill in English language teaching and it comprises of producing systematic verbal utterance to deliver meaning. Nunan (1999), as cited in Farabi, Hassanvand and Gorjian (2017) emphasized that success in learning a language is measured in terms of the ability to carry out a conversation in the (target) language. Cora and Knight (2000), as cited in (Farabi et al., 2017) indicated that, speaking is a fundamental part of second language learning and teaching which involves producing, receiving and processing information.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers conducted a mixed methods study which provided both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methods research is an appropriate design to use if the researcher intends to build on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2012).

The Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design was utilized in this study. The researchers collected both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, merged both data and used the results to comprehend the research problem. The rationale for this design is that one data collection form provides strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form, and that a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem results from both quantitative and qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2012).

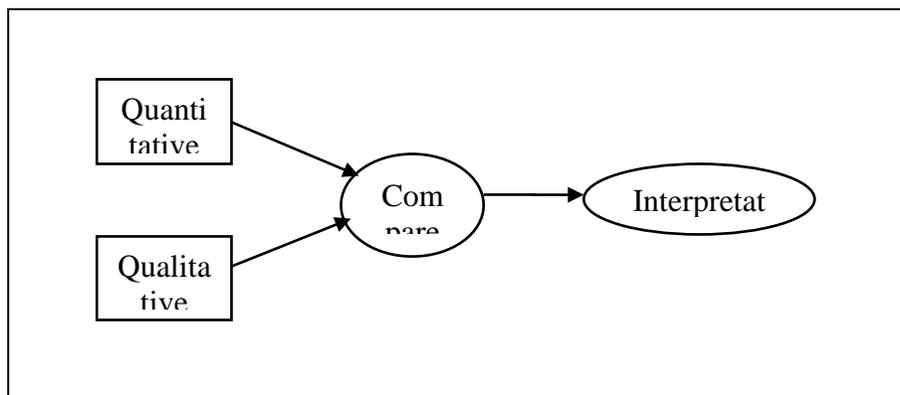


Figure 2. Convergent Parallel Design

Participants

In this study, the participants consisted of 16 Perlis Matriculation College students. All of the participants were in the Intact Group. All participants were in the 1 year matriculation program in 2018/2019 academic session.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study were questionnaires and focused group interviews. In the focused group interviews, the participants were divided into 4 groups and their responses were recorded by using MP4 voice recorder. The data from the interview were transcribed verbatim.

Lesson Plan

Below is the lesson plan used for Gallery Walk activity.

Hour: 3

Skill: Speaking

Topic/Subtopic: Popular Tourist Attractions

Teaching Learning Objective(s):

At the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- i) Practice turn taking and sustaining a turn.
- ii) Respond to various forms of questions and sustain questioning in appropriate context.

Teaching & Learning Strategies:

- i) Students are asked to get into groups of 4 students.
- ii) Students are required to find information on famous tourist attractions.
- iii) Students are asked to present during Gallery Walk activity.

Reflection: Students managed to take part in the Gallery Walk activity smoothly. They really enjoyed the activity.

Data Collection Procedure

The adapted questionnaires comprised 5-point Likert agreement scale-(strongly disagree to strongly agree) questions and 3 open-ended questions. The interview protocols for the focused group interview consisted of 2 questions and each group consisted of 4 participants. Each focused group interview session took about 10 minutes.

The Interview Questions:

- 1) What do you like about Gallery Walk?
- 2) In what way does Gallery Walk help you to perform in the speaking task?

THE FINDINGS

Data Analysis and Discussions

The analysis and discussion will focus on answering the research questions.

What are Students' Perceptions towards the Use of Gallery Walk in Speaking Classroom?

In general, the findings from questionnaires and focus group interview revealed that a majority of the participants (N=16) showed positive response.

Table 1
 Means scores of students' responses to Gallery Walk

Item	Mean	SD
During the Gallery Walk, all group members participated.	4.56	0.63
My overall experience with Gallery Walk was satisfactory.	4.25	0.68
During the Gallery Walk, my group listened respectfully to one another.	4.25	0.68
Gallery Walk was easy to use.	4.18	0.83
I would like to participate in another Gallery Walk.	4.12	0.8
We worked more collaboratively than with usual class discussion techniques.	3.87	0.8
I felt we had enough time to discuss each topic at learning stations.	3.81	0.66

Based on the mean and standard deviation, it clearly verified that generally students had a positive perception about Gallery Walk (Table 1). They confirmed the benefit of Gallery Walk in terms of group members' participation with the highest mean (mean 4.56, SD =0.63) and listening respectfully to one another (mean = 4.25, SD = 0.68). Students also have the perception that Gallery Walk was easy to be used in classroom (mean = 4.18, SD=0.83) and they are willing to participate in another Gallery Walk in the next class of speaking (mean 4.12, SD =0.8). Students also believed that they can work more collaboratively than with usual class discussion techniques (mean =3.87, SD 0.8) and they felt that they had enough time to discuss each topic at learning stations (mean=3.81, SD 0.66).

Table 2
 Focus group interview results

	Encourage Team Work	Interestin g	Build Confidenc e	Gain More Knowledg e	Improve Vocabular y	Improve Grammar
Focus Group 1		X	X	X		X
Focus Group 2	X	X	X	X	X	
Focus Group 3	X	X	X	X	X	
Focus Group 4			X	X	X	X

Focus group interview results, i.e. the emerging themes, are shown in the above table.

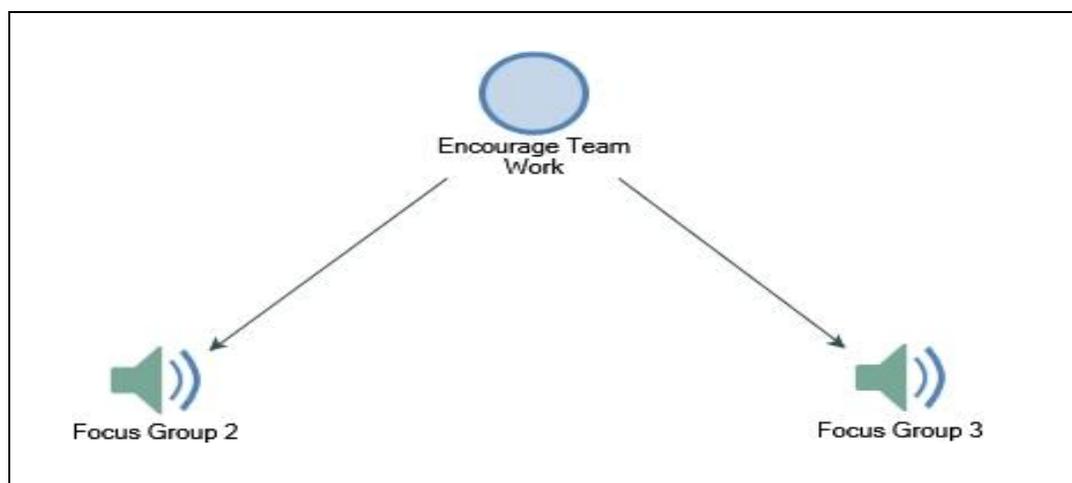


Figure 3.a Gallery Walk Encourages Team Work Among Students

Based on the findings from the focus group interview, the researchers also discovered that 2 focus groups indicated that Gallery Walk encouraged team work among students. They have to act as a team in order to complete their task to be displayed at the corner of their respective gallery. The following extract from the interview session validated the findings.

“.. it will give us commitment to each of us to work together especially to decide on what we are going to do and thus many of us will give cooperation.” (Participant from Focus Group 2)

“Gallery walk is very helpful because it helps students to help each other. We can also gain knowledge in various ways through gallery walk.” (Participant from Focus Group 3)

Open ended response from the students also indicated positive response towards Gallery Walk. For example, when they were questioned what they like about Gallery Walk, majority of the students stated that Gallery walk was interesting and fun. Focus group interview session also revealed these findings (Figure 3b). Below are some extracts taken from the interview session which related to interesting.

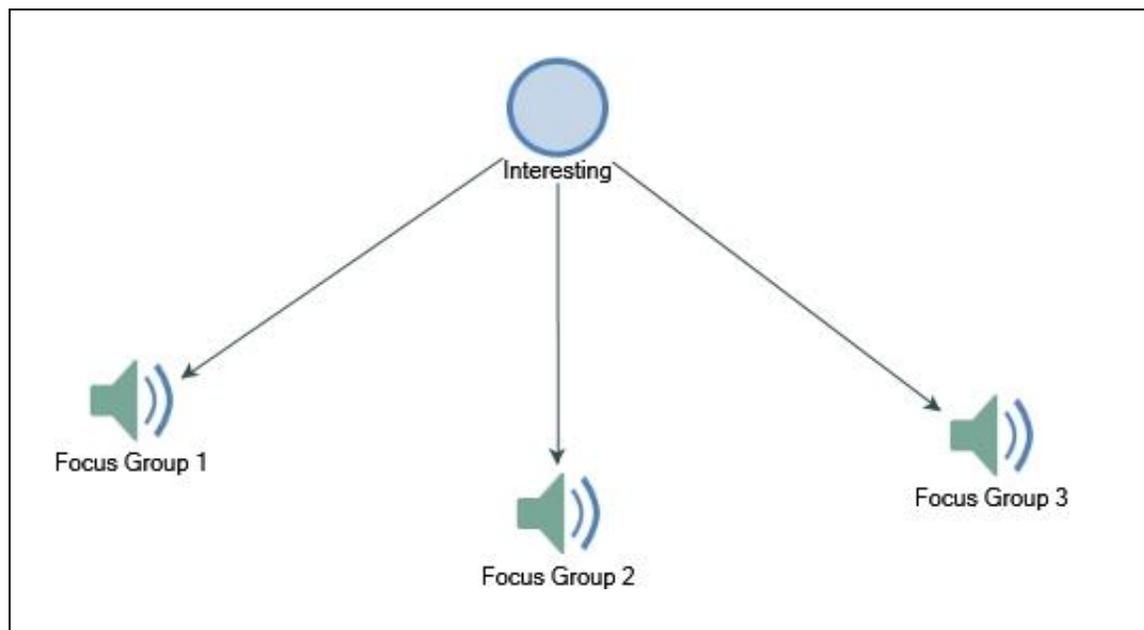


Figure 3.b Students' Perceptions Towards Gallery Walk in Speaking Classroom (Interesting)

Below are some extracts taken from the interview session which are related to interesting.

"For me I think I like about the gallery walk because it was very interesting to see with the colourful thing that students do like when they are doing the posters to make it more interesting for others to see and to understand better." (Participant from Focus Group 1)

"It is interesting but I think that is because a coin has two sides and it got advantage and disadvantage. This one...the bad one is it takes a lot of time but it's interesting and then discipline is very important if we cannot control the discipline somebody will out of the topic." (Participant from Focus Group 2)

"Gallery Walk was very fun and we get to know each other well during that discussion. We can communicate very well. That's really interesting." (Participant from Focus Group 3)

Is Gallery Walk Effective in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skills?

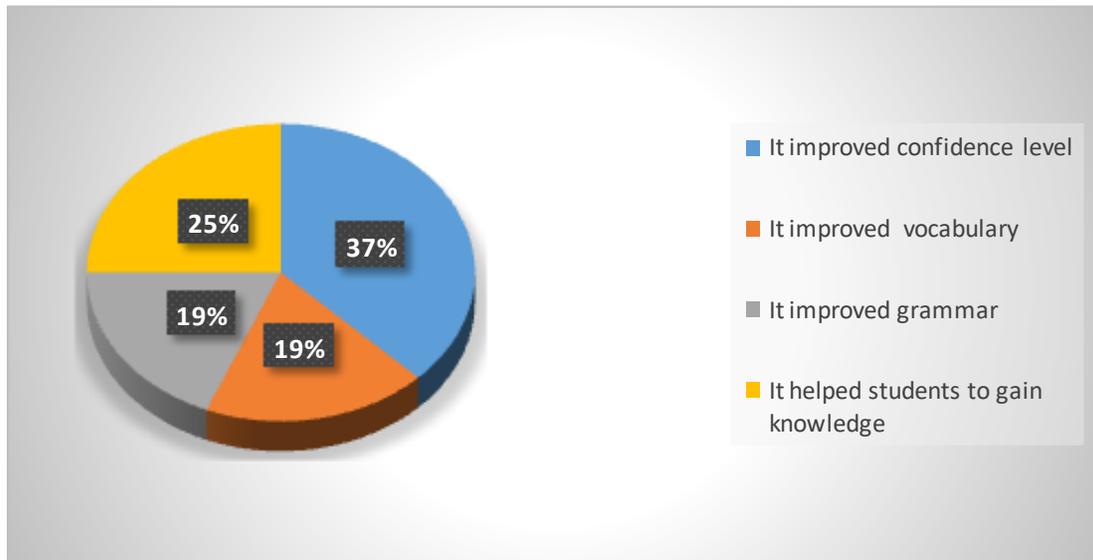


Figure 4.a Percentage of How Gallery Walk Improved Students' Speaking Skills

Figure 4a illustrated how Gallery Walk improved students' speaking skills. Majority of the students stated that Gallery Walk improved their confidence in speaking English with the highest percentage 37%. Gallery Walk also helped students to gain knowledge with the second highest percentage 25% while Gallery Walk improved vocabulary and grammar had recorded the same percentage 19% respectively.

The findings from the Focus Group Interview session also revealed that Gallery Walk built students' confidence level in speaking (Figure 4b). They had equal opportunity to contribute their ideas and shared their knowledge without any fear that will indirectly enhance their confidence in using the language. The following responses had confirmed our findings.

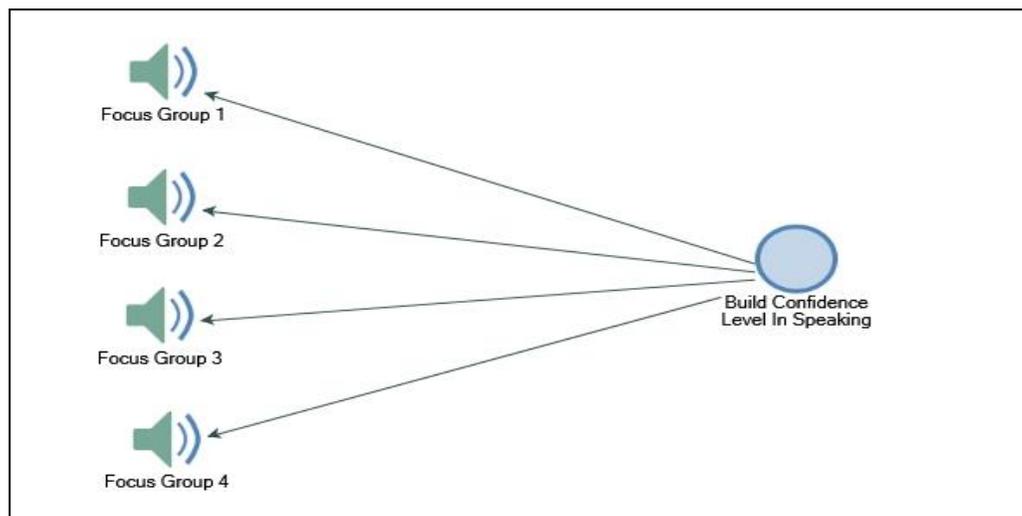


Figure 4.b Gallery Walk Builds Students' Confidence Level in Speaking

"Gallery Walk activity is based on a certain theme. For instance, in the speaking task, we have to speak on vacations. We can use the examples that we have learnt during Gallery Walk activity so we can give more examples and we can give more points. Thus we will sound more confident" (Participant in Focus Group 1)

"I think it can help a lot because for the Gallery Walk why...if in the class we have a small amount of students so we do not have to face many people and we are not too scared enough so we just have the confidence to speak out" (Participant in Focus Group 2)

"It also can improve our language because more confident to speak in English." (Participant in Focus Group 3)

"Through Gallery Walk, from time to time we can upgrade our speaking skill. I can enhance my own confidence level and improve my fluency." (Participant in Focus Group 4)

Apart from that, Gallery Walk activity also enables students to gain more knowledge and information as they are searching for various sources on the Internet while preparing for their gallery materials and while they are taking part in Gallery Walk activity (Figure 4c).

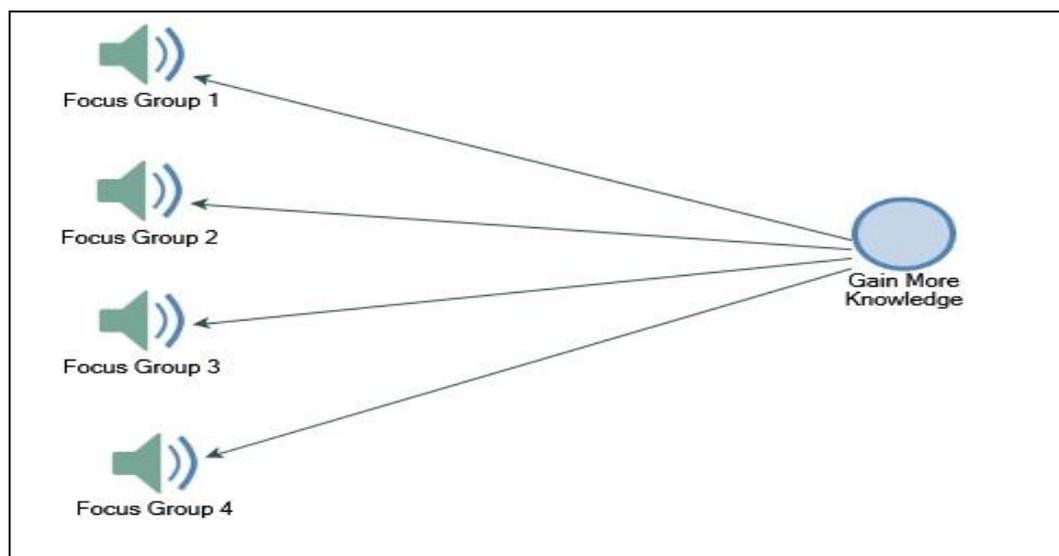


Figure 4.c Gallery Walk Enables Students to Gain More Knowledge

Below are some extracts taken from the interview session that validated this finding.

“...we can gain more knowledge for example when we go to one gallery we will know for instance what can be found in Osaka.” (Participant from Focus Group 1)

“...we can learn more new knowledge about this how to present our ideas by using gallery walk also.” (Participant Focus Group 2)

“We can also gain knowledge in various ways through gallery walk.” (Participant Focus Group 3)

“We can gain a lot of information from other stations.”(Participant Focus Group 4)

“Now we are in the 21st century, through gallery walk we have to discuss with our group members and look for information.” (Participant Focus Group 4)

The findings from the Focus Group Interview also revealed that by participating in Gallery Walk activity has improved and built their vocabulary (Figure 4d). The extract taken from the interview session confirmed the findings.

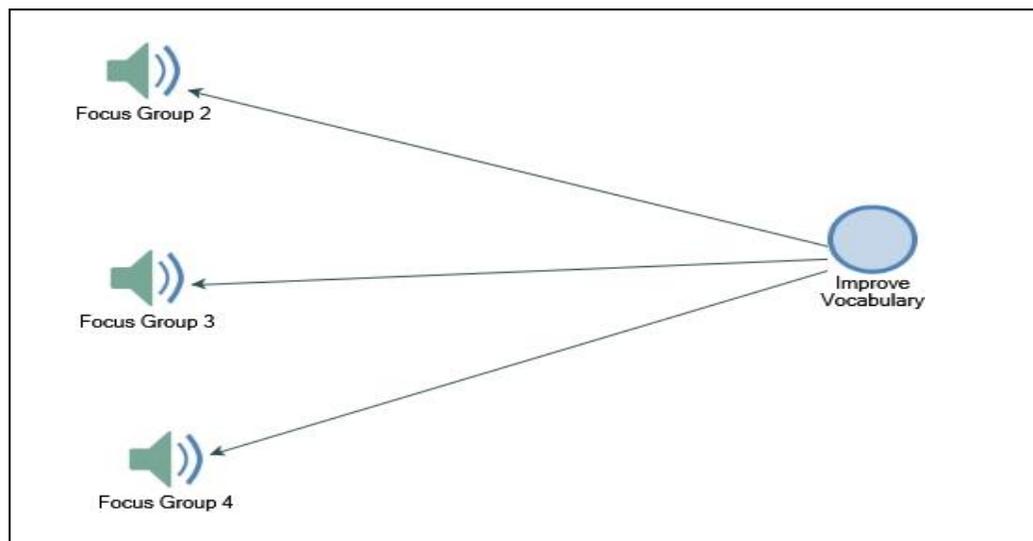


Figure 4.d Gallery Walk Enables Students to Improve Their Vocabulary

“While we are presenting we will build our vocabulary.” (Participant from Focus Group 2)

“It also can improve our vocabulary.” (Participant from Focus Group 3)

“Through Gallery Walk, we can learn new vocabulary ... then we can use them as we perform in the speaking task. We also need to look for information using Google Search so from there we can learn new vocabulary as well.” (Participant from Focus Group 4)

It is interesting to note that the findings from focus group interview also showed that gallery walk helped students to improve their grammar as mentioned by Focus groups 1 and 4 (Figure 4e). It verified that students can learn grammar aspects indirectly and it will help them to perform better in the speaking test. We have observed this from the following responses:

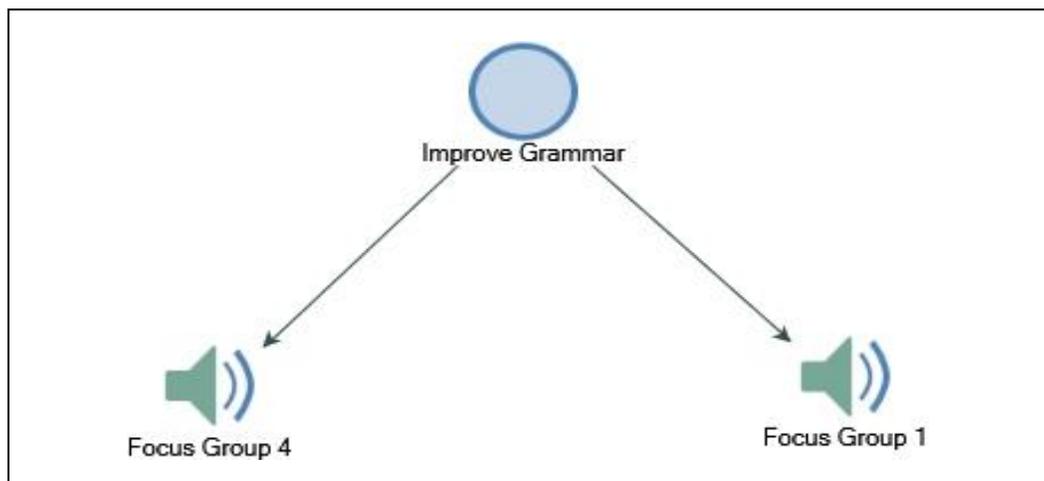


Figure 4.e Gallery walk enables students to improve their grammar

“Through Gallery Walk we will practice to speak in a more formal way and using the correct grammar so during the speaking test we can impress the examiners.”
(Participant from Focus Group 1)

“Through Gallery Walk we can learn grammar by listening to other students’ presentation. Then we can use them as we perform in the speaking task” (Participant from Focus Group 4)

Teaching Implications Based on Participants’ Responses for Focus Group Interviews

Most focus groups revealed the advantages of Gallery Walk activity in the sense that it was an interesting activity to be included in the speaking lesson besides encouraging team work among the participants. The activity also helped them to build more confidence in speaking, gain more knowledge and improve their vocabulary as well as grammar. However, one of the participants mentioned that the activity could take a long time since each group had to go to each station and certain students might digress from the topic given to them during the presentation.

Gallery Walk activity can be useful in teaching sub-skills of speaking such as asking for and giving information, asking for and giving opinion, asking for clarification and justifying point of view. Those sub-skills are important for students to acquire in preparation for MUET Speaking Test. With regard to grammar items, students can practise using appropriate tenses, prepositions, adjectives, adverbs and nouns while asking for information as well as providing information during the activity. They can also improve their vocabulary with content words that are commonly used in tourism websites that could be useful for them during MUET Speaking Test. Teachers and language instructors could integrate Gallery Walk activity in the initial stage of teaching sub-skills of speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

Generally, the findings allow the researchers to conclude that majority of participants exhibited positive perceptions towards Gallery Walk. Their perceptions should be accepted and reviewed genuinely as it is a two-way process involving language instructors and learners. The findings also show that the use of Gallery Walk produces fruitful outcomes in terms of helping students to enhance their speaking skills. This is because they could develop their vocabulary and improved their grammar. The knowledge and information they have obtained by participating in Gallery Walk activity also helped them to deliver their presentation smoothly. Additionally, Gallery Walk activity also utilizes the use of ICT as a way to promote Quality Education, i.e. UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal: 4) which can prepare students for IR 4.0.

Most importantly, Gallery Walk helped students to be more confident in using the language naturally and comfortably. Thus, the findings of this study correspond with the findings of the previous research made by Dinata and Anggraini (2017). They felt the benefits of using the Gallery Walk strategy such as ‘elevating their confidence to speak English and communicating easily with English because it was supported by the guided questions and expressions’.

Gallery Walk activity utilizes the use of ICT as a way to promote sustainability, i.e. Quality Education, UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal: 4). While preparing for the materials for Gallery Walk activity, students will have to make use of a search engine such as Google, to look for the materials related to their tasks. This can sharpen the students’ IT skills as students need to master IT Skills to prepare them for IR 4.0.

The researchers also discovered that speaking class should provide knowledge and experience for students to speak confidently because speaking well can have a dramatic effect on their professional life in future especially when they attend interviews for university enrolments and job interviews. Cheng (2007) indicated that effective communication required more than the ability to talk as it involves the use of one's mental capabilities in the choice of words and the ability to make the other person comprehends what one is saying and vice versa (as cited in Farabi et al., 2017).

As for future research, the researchers would like to suggest other researchers to compare other 21st century classroom activities with Gallery Walk in order to identify their effectiveness in enhancing students’ speaking skills and other related skills.

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